

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 267

By Ford

A RESOLUTION to honor Tennessee native and Baltimore Ravens offensive tackle Michael Oher.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are proud to honor an upstanding ambassador of this State for his accomplishments on the football field; and

WHEREAS, Michael Oher, who plays offensive tackle for the Baltimore Ravens, is one such estimable individual who has been recognized for his exceptional athletic prowess; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oher's inspirational journey from the streets of Memphis to the National Football League (NFL) was chronicled in Michael Lewis's best-selling book, *The Blind Side*, which was made into a major Hollywood blockbuster; and

WHEREAS, one of thirteen children, Michael Oher grew up in a rough section of northern Memphis and bounced between life in foster care and on the streets; and

WHEREAS, Michael's early years were tough and he struggled to avoid the rampant violence, drugs, and gangs that surrounded his childhood; he met Tony Henderson, who ran a neighborhood athletic program and took Michael in; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oher went absent fifty-one days from Westwood High School one year; he had been to eleven schools in nine years, he often cut class, and by the ninth grade, his grade point average was .06 and he was on the road to dropping out; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, Tony Henderson took his own teenage son to be enrolled in Briarcrest Christian School, and he took Michael with him; and

WHEREAS, Briarcrest coaches were amazed that someone with Michael's stature—which is now 6'6" and 320 pounds—could move like a dancer on the basketball court; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oher's coaches noticed that he rarely went to the same home after games and, when he was sixteen, he was taken in by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, whose two children, Collins and Sean, Jr., attended Briarcrest as well; and

WHEREAS, the Tuohys never treated Michael as anything less than a member of the family, even including him in their yearly Christmas card; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oher, who had played football as a child, joined the Briarcrest varsity football team his junior year. In his senior season, he took over as the starting left tackle and quickly became one of the top prospects at the position; and

WHEREAS, Michael had a lot to make up for academically; Mr. and Mrs. Tuohy brought in a tutor, Sue Mitchell, and she and the Tuohys spent hours daily assisting Michael in his studies and helping him catch up; and

WHEREAS, by Mr. Oher's senior year of high school, his countless hours of hard work and dedication began to pay off; not only was he making an academic comeback, but his football career skyrocketed; and

WHEREAS, Michael competed in the US Army All-American Bowl and was named to Rivals.com's All-American Bowl All-Time Team; selected by Tom Lemming/ESPN as the nation's top offensive tackle, Michael was named to the SuperPrep All-American team, he earned *USA Today* and *EA Sports* All-American honors, and he had college scholarship offers pouring in; and

WHEREAS, a multi-talented athlete, Mr. Oher was also a state runner-up in the discus as a senior in high school and he earned All-State honors by helping lead the basketball team to a 27-6 record, winning the district championship as a senior; and

WHEREAS, coming from the streets of Memphis, there was a lot of speculation as to whether Michael Oher could ever even graduate from high school; not only did he earn his high school diploma, but he went on to attend and play football for The University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy's alma mater, and the school which their daughter, Collins, would also be attending; and

WHEREAS, in college, Mr. Oher was All-SEC First Team, First Team All-American, runner-up to The Outland Award, and he received The Jacobs Award for best blocker in the SEC; and

WHEREAS, after playing just three years at Ole Miss, Michael Oher became eligible for the NFL draft; recruiters accurately pegged him as a first-round draft pick, and he was selected in the first round of the 2009 draft by the Baltimore Ravens, the team for which he plays as an offensive tackle; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Mr. Oher was named to the *Pro Football Weekly/Pro Football Writers of America* All-Rookie Team in 2009; he was named the *Sports Illustrated* Mid-Season All-Pro in 2009; he was named to *USA Today's* All-Joe Team in 2009; he was named NFL Rookie of the Month in December 2009; and he received the Congressional Award Gold Medal in June 2010; and

WHEREAS, most recently, Michael Oher played an instrumental role in helping the Baltimore Ravens secure a 34-31 victory over the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XLVII on February 3, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oher's story of perseverance and personal triumph is one which we would all do well to emulate; when such outstanding individuals conquer life's hardships and become productive members of society, they deserve to be specially recognized and applauded for their incredible achievements; and

WHEREAS, Michael Oher's tireless and noble efforts as an offensive tackle have contributed greatly to the success of the Baltimore Ravens, and it is fitting that we join with the people of Memphis and Tennessee in saluting this dazzling player who has excelled time and again both on and off the football gridiron; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Michael Oher on his tremendous success as one of the best offensive tackles in the NFL and extend to him our best wishes for every continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.